



# VIZ

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Volume 1, No. 9.

## Mai, the Movie

**N**ot only is *Mai, the Psychic Girl* a great comic book story but now it is also being regarded as "tremendously exciting" movie material. Viz Comics and noted movie producer and writer Larry Wilson are negotiating the signing of an option contract for the movie rights to *Mai*.

Wilson coproduced and cowrote the fantastical *Beetlejuice*, which instantly became a No. 1 box office hit when it was released, grossing \$80 million to date. *Beetlejuice* is currently one of the top video rentals and video disc sellers in the country.

(continued on the next page)

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# Mai, the Movie

(continued from the front page)

While documents have been flying back and forth between Japan and the U.S., Wilson has already lined up a coproducer, Walter Hill, and a production company, Carolco. Hill directed the highly successful *48 Hours* and produced both *Alien* movies, to mention only a few of his hits. Carolco has produced all the *Rambo* movies.

Wilson said that he "became aware of manga" on a trip he made to Japan in 1977 to meet the Japanese actor Ken Takakura. "I thought they were wonderful," said Wilson, a life-long comic book fan and collector. "When I first saw Viz and Eclipse's translation of *Mai*, when I saw the cover of the first issue, it just struck me, something in my guts grabbed me and made me decide to try to get the rights. That was in February 1988. I've been working on it for a long time."

*Mai the movie* is conceived as a live-action film with a lot of special effects, not an animated remake. Wilson stated, "I really think that with *Mai* we can do something as striking and visual as we did with *Beetlejuice*. I think of the film cinematically as very high-tech and extravagant, and I want to capture the

strong visual flavor of the comic book. But the human side is very important too; *Mai* presents the very human story of a little girl coming of age. *Mai* is just how you would want every little girl to be. Besides her special powers, she's self-possessed and has a good sense of herself. And she's humanistic."

Even though Wilson has begun to put a few of the pieces in place, you probably won't be able to catch *Mai* at your local theater for at least a year or two. But Wilson's virtual labor of love to have *Mai* on the silver screen ensures

the making of the film version of "a great adventure story." As he enthusiastically commented: "We're really going for the golden ring on this one."

Viz is reissuing *Mai, the Psychic Girl* as a four-volume Japanese-style graphic novel. It is the "complete, uncut" version, featuring pages not printed in the original Viz/Eclipse biweekly release. Volume 1 came out in March, and the others will appear in May, July, and September. Each volume runs approximately 260 to 300 pages. The cover price is \$16.95 in the U.S.

## A New Film from Hayao Miyazaki

Hayao Miyazaki, the creator of the comic *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, is working on a new animated feature film. *Majo no Takkyubin*, "The Express Courier Service of a Witch," will be released later this year.

"Witch's Express" will be Miyazaki's fourth animated film. He is regarded by many critics as the best animation film director in the world. His other films—the animated version of *Nausicaä*, the stunning *Laputa*, and *Tonari no Totoro*—have been internationally acclaimed. *Tonari no Totoro* was not only considered the best animation film in Japan in 1988 but was voted "the best Japanese movie" in a critics' poll by *Kinemajunpo*, Japan's highly respected cinema magazine.

This production represents Miyazaki's

first adaptation; he created and wrote the stories for his other films. "Witch's Express" is based on a popular children's book by Eiko Sumino about a young witch named Kiki. Kiki finds out that every witch must leave her parents and find her own place to live when she reaches the age of 13. Even though all she has learned to do is fly on a broom, she still has no choice but to leave. The story follows her adventures searching for a new home and friends.

Even though this current film project means another delay in completing the *Nausicaä* story, fans will just have to content themselves with what will no doubt be another great animated film. Let's hope for an English-language version soon!



VIZ-PICKS

Story and art by Shotaro Iizuka. Appeared in Big Comics, 1973. Graphic novel in

During the Tokugawa period in Japan, Tokyo (then Edo) came the largest city with more than a million people. The Shogun, with several hundred orders in Edo

### Sound FX

Osamu Tezuka, the father of post-war Japanese comics, passed away on February 9. The Daily Yomiuri announced recently. He succumbed at 60 to stomach cancer.

As leader of the post-war Japanese comic/animation explosion, Tezuka left a lasting impression on younger comic-book writers and artists.

The influential artist and writer created numerous monumental works, including *Astro Boy* (Iron

Arm Atom); *The Fire Bird*; *Leo: The Emperor of the Jungle*; and many others. Viz-In will focus on Tezuka in our next issue.



... Tetsuo Hara, the artist of *Fist of the North Star*, and BOB, a comic writer, started a new series in January in the Japanese weekly manga magazine *Shonen Jump*. "Cyber Blue," about a "terminator" who assassinates evil men, is Hara's first title since he completed *Fist*. In "Cyber Blue," Hara again demonstrates his exciting and dynamic graphic style. ... *Yawara*, the extremely popular title by Naoki Urasawa (the artist of *Pineapple Army*) is going to be made into a (live-action) film, starring Yui

Asaka, a teen idol in Japan. *Yawara* is about a cute young female judo champion competing in the Olympics for a gold medal. The film is scheduled for release this summer. ... *Mobile Cop: Patlabor* is becoming a huge hit in Japan, the result of a unique multimedia marketing venture that began in 1988 offering comics, home animated videos, and toys. Each volume of a two-volume graphic novel and a six-volume animation video series has consistently made the best-seller lists. *Mobile*



# Dreaming about Lum

## An Interview with Rumiko Takahashi, Part 2 Interview by Seiji Horibuchi

**SH:** Where do you get your ideas for your stories?

**RT:** My head.

**SH:** Your head?

**RT:** Yes. I get some inspiration from the Japanese folk tales and legends I read as a child. And, novels. But, it isn't that my ideas come from novels. Simply, if I like the novel, I read it...

**SH:** How about American comics?

**RT:** Well, when *Spiderman* came out in Japan, I liked it. It was adapted by Kosei Ono [a noted Japanese critic of American comics]. I was a big fan of the artist who drew the Japanese version [Ryoichi Ikegami, the artist of *Mai, the Psychic Girl*], and so I began to like the comic book, too.

**SH:** What's a typical day like for you?

**RT:** There is no rhythm to my life; it's very irregular. Usually I get up after noon and just sort of hang around until

evening or so. I eat out almost everyday. I cook about once a year. I love TV dinners. (Laughter) Work really begins at night.

Before I start on a story, I meet with my editor to discuss the basic outline and characters. After that, I usually sit at my work table for a day or two and just think about the outline and characters and about structuring a story. This is the most difficult part of being a professional comic artist—the drawing is easy. To be a professional comic artist, you have to learn to be patient. When I get stuck for an idea, I start to sweat, my stomach aches, my heart pounds, and all that. You have to be physically and mentally strong to work in this business.

**SH:** Do you have assistants?

**RT:** Yes, three at present.

**SH:** Are they all women?

**RT:** Yes.

**SH:** Is that by chance or do you find it easier to work with women?

**RT:** Well, I'm a woman, of course. When you have only women around at work, you don't have to worry about things too much. For example, at break time, Japanese men don't make any tea or coffee. So, I guess women just go ahead and do it, even though they don't think it's really fair or right. For the job itself, it really makes no difference whether an assistant is male or female. Whoever works well gets the job. But, I don't want to be bothered by any of that emotional stuff. That's why I work with women.

**SH:** What's the hardest part of creating a character?

**RT:** Once the special tone and style in which a character speaks becomes clear, that is, once I know what sort of thing that character will always say, and how that character will say it, then things begin to move and develop easily. Each character has to have his own vocabulary and speech patterns. But, it's pretty hard to discover that.

I have to determine what each character likes, dislikes, his habits... Once those things can be summed up in a single phrase, or a specific style, then everything is okay.

**SH:** What about the role of comics in society?

**RT:** Umm... not much to say about that. You see, I simply draw what I want to draw. I'm not trying to appeal to any specific element in society. Comics are just one form of entertainment. Readers should have fun reading my books and feel that they've gotten their money's worth. That's all. I don't expect anything more from my readers.

I believe comics express something other media don't, something specific to comics. And, that's my identity, too. The comics medium is equal to, or even more powerful than, other media.

**SH:** Do you have any final comments to share with fans?

**RT:** Japanese culture and the things that appear in my books may be very interesting and exotic, but I really believe that, regardless of what country you come from, the characters' feelings are easy to understand. If fans can enjoy that, well, that's what really counts!

## Sabu and Ichi Samurai Detective Story

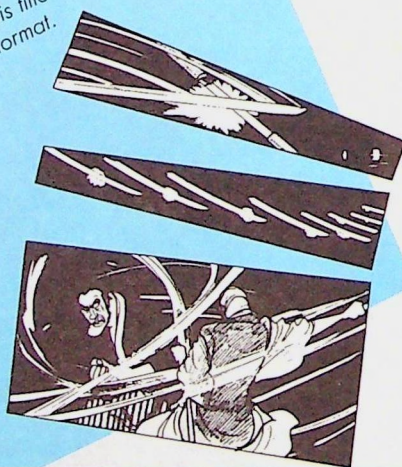
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3 volumes.

ra (1600-1868)  
called Edo) be-  
in the world, with  
people. Like most  
d its share of crime.  
uler of Japan, had  
samurai helping maintain  
and in addition non-

samurai were hired by the city administration to assist the police.

This comic is about Sabu, a young police assistant, and his friend Ichi, a blind masseur who is also an expert swordsman. A crack detective team, they solve even the most mysterious murders or other crimes with their wit and skill.

Sabu and Ichi became well known for its interesting characters and graphically striking period backgrounds. Viz is considering this title for release in graphic novel format.



### Area 88 Grounded

Mission #42 will be the last for the crew of Area 88 for a while as Viz Comics announces a break in the action series owing to demands of new projects. Plans are to restart it later or package it for release with another publisher. The series began running biweekly in 1988 as a Viz/Eclipse co-release. It went monthly as a Viz independent publication in December 1988.

### Grey Finally Gets Toy

Grey, Viz's first independent comic series, ends this June with the release of the final volume of this futuristic tale by Yoshihisa Tagami. Complete in nine issues, Grey represented Tagami's full story—there have been no other episodes featuring the reckless, hard-boiled Trooper turned Half-ling. In "Approaches" 10 and 11, Grey finally reaches the inner sanctum of "The City" and learns its terrible secret.



Cop will also be made into an animated film for theater release late this year... The holiday season in Japan brought a rush of animated home video releases to consumers, including *One-Pound Gospel*, *Mobile Cop: Patlabor #6*, *Akira*, *Dragon Ball*, and *Bubblegum Crisis #5*.



# VIZ SELECT COMICS

—Deluxe, squarebound, book-shelf formats  
—Black & white with full-color covers

## FIST OF THE NORTH STAR #3

story by Buronson  
art by Tetsuo Hara  
monthly, 48 pages  
8 issues  
\$2.95 USA / \$4.00 CAN

Kenshiro approaches the Southern Cross, the headquarters of the vicious Kingmen gang. A wild Diamond and an especially nasty Club challenge the master of the sacred martial art of the Great Bear. Kenshiro shows no mercy as he demonstrates "The Visage-Cracking Fist of the North Star" and "The Bloody Hand of Bullets."

**Shipping June 6**



## LUM • URUSEI YATSURA #2

by Rumiko Takahashi  
monthly, 48 pages  
8 issues  
\$2.95 USA / \$4.00 CAN

In "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head," the fate of the world is once again on the shoulders of Ataru Moroboshi. His inadvertent ride with the Pangalactic Yellow Cab precipitates an international crisis when the alien cabdriver demands a rather exorbitant fare. Lum is only too eager to help Ataru, but he's not sure that saving the earth is worth the price she demands!

Ataru is lured out of hiding by Sakura, a beautiful and mysterious priestess, who promises to exorcise the demons causing Ataru's endless misfortunes. But Ataru's curse is not so easily removed, especially when Sakura has a few restless spirits of her own!

**Shipping June 6**



## GREY Book 9

by Yoshihisa Tagami  
monthly, 72 pages  
9 issues  
\$3.25 USA / \$4.40 CAN

In this final episode of the series, Grey and Lara maneuver around the City's gunships and enter the walls of the City. Determined to help Grey fulfill his destined role, Lara deflects the City's beam-cannons, pushing Grey closer and closer to the Control Center—and Toy. Grey discovers the true value of a Citizen and at last reaches his goal, but somehow it's not the way they told him it would be.

**Shipping June 27**



## GREY: DIGITAL TARGET



Available only from Viz Comics  
\$124.95 includes postage and handling  
Original Japanese version  
80 minutes

"Grey: Digital Target" is the video of the successful animation film based on the comic Grey. It's a must for diehard Grey and anime fans.

Send money order or cashier's check in U.S. dollars made payable to Viz Comics to: GREY: DIGITAL TARGET  
Viz Comics  
P.O. Box 77010  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
Specify VHS or BETA.  
Please allow four to six weeks for delivery.

## VIZ-IN News Magazine

\$4.00 per bundle of 100  
Read about new Viz releases, anime, writers, artists, everything that's happening in the manga scene in Japan and North America. Enjoy one of the highest-quality comics newsletters in the industry.

**Shipping June 20**

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**LUM GALLERY**